

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

1. (Currently Amended) A steering column apparatus comprising:

a steering column for rotatably supporting a steering shaft therein, the steering column having an integrally formed bulging distance portion, the steering column further having an integrally formed ~~provided with a steering lock mount portion on its~~ an outer circumference thereof and supporting a steering shaft rotatably disposed rearwardly of the bulging distance portion;

the bulging distance portion having flat side wall portions opposed to each other and a bottom wall portion connecting the flat side wall portions, the flat side wall portions being constructed so as to be fastened to corresponding vehicle body side members such that the steering column is fixed thereto,

a steering lock having a lock key for latching said steering shaft and a first contact surface that is in

contact with a first part of an abutting surface of said steering lock mount portion of said steering column; and

a lock bracket having a second contact surface that is in contact with a second part of the abutting surface of said steering lock mount portion, said first contact surface of said steering lock and said second contact surface of said lock bracket embracing said steering lock mount portion of said steering column,

wherein at least one of the first part and the second part of the abutting surface of the steering lock mount portion has a cross-sectional shape of variable radius, with the corresponding one of said first and second contact surfaces being of a shape complementary thereto.

2. (Previously Presented) A steering column apparatus according to claim 1, wherein said first part of the abutting surface of said steering lock mount portion has a part-circular cross section.

3. (Currently Amended) A steering column apparatus according to claim 1, wherein said steering lock mount portion ~~is~~ and said bulging distance portion are plastically formed by a bulge process.

4. (Currently Amended) A steering column apparatus according to claim 3, wherein said ~~steering column~~ includes a ~~plastically formed portion other than said steering lock mount portion, and said plastically formed~~ bulging distance portion is plastically formed by a bulge process simultaneously with the steering lock mount portion.

Claims 5-6. (Canceled).

7. (Previously Presented) A steering column apparatus according to claim 1, wherein both the first part and the second part of the abutting surface have a cross-sectional shape of variable radius.

8. (Currently Amended) A steering column apparatus comprising:

a steering column rotatably supporting a steering shaft, the steering column including ~~and~~ an integrally formed bulging distance portion and ~~provided with an~~ integrally formed steering lock mount portion,

the bulging distance portion having flat side wall portions opposed to each other and a bottom wall portion

connecting the flat side wall portions, the flat side wall portions being constructed so as to be fastened to corresponding vehicle body side members such that the steering column is fixed thereto,

the steering lock mount portion having an abutting surface on its outer circumference;

a steering lock having a lock key for latching said steering shaft and a first contact surface complementary to and in contact with a first part of said abutting surface; and

a lock bracket having a second contact surface complementary to and in contact with a second part of said abutting surface, the steering lock being attached to the lock bracket such that said first contact surface of the steering lock and said second contact surface of the lock bracket embrace said steering lock mount portion,

wherein said abutting surface has a non-uniform shape in cross-section such that said abutting surface and at least one of said complementary first and second contact surfaces cooperate so as to prevent relative rotation between the steering lock and the steering column.

9. (Previously Presented) A steering column apparatus according to claim 8, wherein said first part of said abutting surface has a part-circular cross-sectional shape and said second part of said abutting surface has a cross-sectional shape of variable radius.

10. (Previously Presented) A steering column apparatus according to claim 8, wherein said steering lock mount portion includes a bulging portion of said steering column.

11. (Currently Amended) A steering column apparatus according to claim 10, wherein ~~said steering column~~the bulging distance portion includes an additional bulging portion plastically formed simultaneously with the steering lock mount portion.

12. (Currently Amended) A steering column apparatus according to claim 8, wherein the first contact surface ~~contact surfaces~~ of the steering lock and the second contact surface of the lock bracket have cross-sectional shapes of variable radius.

13. (Currently Amended) A steering column apparatus
| according to claim 8, wherein one of the first and second
| contact surfaces has a cross-sectional shape of constant
| radius, and the other of the first and second contact
| surfaces has a cross-sectional shape of variable radius.